



The HEXACO correlates of authoritarianism's facets in the U.S. and Denmark



Jie Liu^{a,*}, Steven G. Ludeke^b, Ingo Zettler^a

^a University of Copenhagen, Denmark

^b University of Southern Denmark, Denmark

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 6 March 2017

Received in revised form 9 May 2017

Accepted 10 May 2017

Available online 15 May 2017

Keywords:

Authoritarianism

Honesty-Humility

Conventionalism

HEXACO

Cross-cultural

ABSTRACT

Research on authoritarianism is increasingly focusing on distinctions among its three facets: authoritarian aggression, authoritarian submission, and conventionalism. We use convenience samples from the U.S. ($N = 187$) and Denmark ($N = 226$) to explore the HEXACO personality correlates of the authoritarian facets. As expected, Openness was the most pronounced (negative) predictor of the full-scale authoritarianism and its three facets, and results with Conscientiousness were not significant but were consistent with the modest (positive) associations typically reported. Most important was the predictable differences in the relations the facets had with Honesty-Humility, which was more positively related to conventionalism than authoritarian aggression in the U.S. sample, but not in the Danish sample. Interestingly, the U.S. sample scored significantly higher in authoritarianism and its facets than the Danish sample. We offer a tentative account concerning the desirability of authoritarian beliefs in the two national contexts.

© 2017 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

The recent electoral success of authoritarian candidates and parties across the Western world has renewed interest in understanding Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA). According to the Dual-Process Cognitive-Motivational Model (DPM model; Duckitt, 2001), RWA expresses the motivational goal of social cohesion and collective security, and is made chronically salient both by schematic perception of the social world and stable individual differences in personality (Duckitt, 2001; Duckitt, Wagner, du Plessis, & Birum, 2002). These and similar ideas have sparked a large body of research which seeks to understand authoritarianism's origins using the five-factor and HEXACO models of personality (Cohrs, Kämpfe-Hargrave, & Riemann, 2012; Lee, Ashton, Ogunfowora, Bourdage, & Shin, 2010). However, most such studies have almost universally focused on authoritarianism as a unitary phenomenon (e.g., Hodson, Hogg, & MacInnis, 2009; Perry & Sibley, 2012). By contrast, research on the consequences of authoritarianism increasingly differentiates between the different "facets" of authoritarianism (Duckitt & Bizumic, 2013): authoritarian aggression, authoritarian submission, and conventionalism.

These facets are not merely conceptually distinguishable, but also show different relations with important outcomes. For example, authoritarian aggression is particularly linked to punitive attitudes towards outgroups, whereas authoritarian submission is the best predictor of respect for authorities and opposition to rebellion, and conventionalism is

the most associated with high religiosity and negative views of sexual minorities (Duckitt & Bizumic, 2013; Duckitt, Bizumic, Krauss, & Heled, 2010). This new focus on authoritarian facets requires a reconsideration and elaboration of the relation between personality and authoritarianism, which we aim to provide here by linking the HEXACO traits—Honesty-Humility, Emotionality, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness to Experience (in the following: Openness)—to the RWA facets using data from convenience samples from two countries.

While no study has investigated the links between the HEXACO traits and the RWA facets yet, initial expectations can be guided by conceptual links between the HEXACO traits and the RWA facets, by previous research linking the HEXACO traits to full-scale authoritarianism, as well as by previous research linking the Big Five (traits or aspects) to authoritarianism (full-scale or facets). After briefly describing the RWA facets, we discuss potential links between these facets and (i) Openness and Conscientiousness, (ii) Honesty-Humility and Agreeableness, as well as (iii) Emotionality and Extraversion.

From the earliest work on the topic by Adorno and colleagues (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950), authoritarianism has been conceptualized as a construct comprising several related personality characteristics. In the last decades, however, it has typically been treated as an unidimensional personality construct, mainly due to the widespread use of Altemeyer's (1981) unidimensional RWA scale, as well as variants of this (e.g., Zakrisson, 2005). Importantly, Altemeyer's scale referred to (the mélange of) three RWA components: authoritarian submission, authoritarian aggression, and conventionalism. However, individual items were given content simultaneously reflecting two or even three of these components, preventing any

* Corresponding author at: Department of Psychology, University of Copenhagen, Øster Farimagsgade 5, Building 10, 1353 Copenhagen, Denmark.
E-mail address: jie.liu@psy.ku.dk (J. Liu).

straightforward computation of authoritarian facet scores from Altemeyer's measure. Consequently, recent research has re-considered the structure of measures of RWA, and provided theoretical arguments as well as empirical support for distinguishing between authoritarian submission, authoritarian aggression, and conventionalism (Duckitt et al., 2010). In Duckitt et al.'s view, authoritarianism represents "a social attitudinal expression of the broad motivational goal or value of collective security, which arises from social threat and insecurity in general" (Duckitt et al., 2010, p.690). The facets are more narrowly focused: authoritarian submission refers to "expressing attitudes favoring uncritical, respectful, obedient, submissive support for existing societal or group authorities and institutions (protrait) versus critical questioning, rebellious, oppositional attitudes towards them (contrait)" (p. 690), authoritarian aggression refers to "expressing attitudinal beliefs favoring the use of strict, tough, harsh, punitive, coercive social control (protrait) versus leniency, indulgence, permissiveness, softness, to violation of social rules and laws (contrait)" (p. 690), and conventionalism refers to "expressing attitudes favoring traditional, old fashioned social norms, values, and morality (protrait) versus modern, liberal, secular, bohemian, "alternative" values, norms, and morality (contrait)" (p. 691; all from Duckitt et al., 2010). Given the importance of facet-level differentiation in, for instance, predicting attitudes towards different groups (Duckitt & Bizumic, 2013), we aim to shed light on their dispositional bases in the realm of the HEXACO traits.

First, we consider the roles of HEXACO Openness and Conscientiousness, which virtually mirror their Big Five counterparts (Ashton, Lee, & de Vries, 2014). A meta-analysis of Big Five correlates of full-scale authoritarianism highlights Openness ($r = -0.36$) and, though to a lesser degree, Conscientiousness ($r = 0.15$) as the most pronounced correlates (Sibley & Duckitt, 2008). Importantly, these personality traits may be similarly relevant for all components of the authoritarianism construct: in the only study to date to look at the Big Five correlates of authoritarianism's facets, Nicol and de France (2016) found that each RWA facet was related to Openness (negatively) and Conscientiousness (positively). In a similar vein, studies using the HEXACO model (Lee et al., 2010; Leone, Chirumbolo, & Desimoni, 2012a; Leone, Desimoni, & Chirumbolo, 2012b; Sibley, Harding, Perry, Asbrock, & Duckitt, 2010) have consistently revealed that Openness is the strongest correlate of (full-scale) RWA, and that Conscientiousness is, in general, modestly positively correlated with (full-scale) RWA. Stated briefly, the link between Openness and authoritarianism is typically explained by the fact that people low in Openness tend to value clear and potentially inflexible moral standards and be more sensitive to threats to the existing social order and thus should perceive outgroups that endorse values different from their own as threatening. The link between Conscientiousness and authoritarianism is explained by the positive association between Conscientiousness and social conformity (Duckitt et al., 2002), which is conceptually linked to authoritarianism. We thus expect moderate negative correlations between Openness and all RWA facets (Hypothesis 1) as well as modest positive correlations between Conscientiousness and all RWA facets (Hypothesis 2).

Next, we consider the roles of Honesty-Humility and Agreeableness, for which no exact counterparts can be found in the five-factor framework. Honesty-Humility, though showing some overlap with Big Five Agreeableness (Ashton et al., 2014), is added as a sixth basic trait in the HEXACO model, comprising aspects such as fairness and sincerity as well as modesty and greed avoidance (Zettler & Hilbig, 2015). Generally, studies have differed quite strongly in the relations between Honesty-Humility and (full-scale) RWA. While some have found negative correlations (up to $r = -0.22$ in Leone et al., 2012a), others have found positive correlations (up to $r = 0.20$ in Sibley et al., 2010). Concerning the correlations between Honesty-Humility and RWA facets, since no study has directly examined this topic so far, potential expectations can be sought by investigating their relations with

personal values, which have been linked with HEXACO traits as well as RWA facets. Within Schwartz's value taxonomy (Schwartz et al., 2012), Okimoto, Wenzel, and Feather (2012) found that the Conservation (vs Openness) dimension exhibited similar—positive—correlations with all three authoritarianism facets, whereas the Self-Enhancement (vs Self-Transcendence) dimension exhibited positive links only with authoritarian aggression and submission, but no association with conventionalism. Because Honesty-Humility is positively linked to Conservation values and negatively linked to Self-Enhancement values (Lee et al., 2010; Pozzebon & Ashton, 2009), its relation to the RWA facets may vary based on the facet. Specifically, the positive link of Conservation values to both the authoritarianism facets and Honesty-Humility suggests a positive correlation between all three authoritarianism facets and Honesty-Humility; however, for authoritarian aggression and authoritarian submission, this will be counteracted by their positive association with Self-Enhancement (a negative correlate of Honesty-Humility). Conventionalism, lacking this relation with Self-Enhancement, should thus be most positively related to Honesty-Humility of the three authoritarianism facets (Hypothesis 3).

HEXACO Agreeableness, comprising aspects such as forgivingness, gentleness, flexibility and patience, is mainly different from Big Five Agreeableness in its inclusion of anger-related characteristics (Ashton et al., 2014). Additionally, HEXACO Agreeableness is conceptually closely linked to Big Five aspect of Politeness as compared to Compassion, whereas Compassion is more linked to HEXACO Emotionality (Ashton et al., 2014; Ludeke, Liu, Zhao, Smilie, & Zettler, 2017). Previous HEXACO studies have typically observed modestly positive correlations between Agreeableness and (full-scale) RWA (ranging from $r = 0.00$ to $r = 0.19$). These findings are further supported by a recent study linking the Big Five "aspects" to authoritarianism, while Big Five Agreeableness is, overall, not linked to RWA ($r = 0.00$ in the meta-analysis by Sibley and Duckitt (2008), Sibley and Duckitt (2012)) found opposing effects for the Big Five Agreeableness aspects of Politeness (positively linked with authoritarianism) and Compassion (negatively linked with authoritarianism). Thus, the overall small positive correlations with full-scale RWA in previous studies as well as its conceptual link with the Big Five aspect Politeness suggest a positive correlation between Agreeableness and RWA. However, HEXACO Agreeableness comprises, in addition to those components described above, tendencies towards leniency, mildness, and peacefulness (Ashton & Lee, 2008), which are conceptually in contrast to attitudes comprised in authoritarianism aggression. Thus, we expect a small positive correlation between HEXACO Agreeableness and authoritarian submission as well as conventionalism (Hypothesis 4a), but a negative correlation between HEXACO Agreeableness and authoritarian aggression (Hypothesis 4b).

For two of the remaining HEXACO traits—Extraversion and Emotionality—we neither expect associations with RWA in general or any nuanced relations with particular facets. The relation between full-scale authoritarianism and Extraversion is small and unstable, ranging from -0.15 to 0.02 (Lee et al., 2010; Leone et al., 2012a; Leone et al., 2012b; Sibley & Duckitt, 2008). Similarly, the relation between full-scale authoritarianism and Emotionality is also very small, ranging from -0.06 to 0.08 (Lee et al., 2010; Leone et al., 2012a; Leone et al., 2012b). Thus, we have no specific hypotheses between authoritarian facets and these two personality traits.

We tested these expectations in two convenience samples from two countries, namely, an internet sample from the U.S., and a student sample from Denmark. We are not aware of any previous report concerning the personality correlates of authoritarianism in Denmark, but because studies in other Scandinavian countries produced results comparable to those in the U.S., we expected no dissimilarity between results in the two countries (Akrami & Ekehammar, 2006; Ekehammar, Akrami, Gylje, & Zakrisson, 2004).

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/5035626>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/5035626>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)